

## The Athenian Mercury

Saturday, May 19. 1694.



Quest. 1.

As soon as the bless'd Sabbath dawns, and all  
The tinkling Bells our pious Zealots call  
Unto the Church, I hasten with the rest  
To supplicate, but my disorder'd Breast  
Is not, alas! with Holy Thoughts possess'd.  
My Prayers and Zeal are cold, they all take part  
With that from whence they come, a Frozen Heart.  
Behold a Fatal Beauty planted there!  
(I had been Pious had she seem'd less fair)  
To her Ten-thousand Sighs I send, 'tis she  
Is worshipt as the Temples Deity.  
And were she truly Goddess of the Fane,  
I could turn Zealot, vow, and vow again.  
(For Vows are Lovers prayers) but wou'd despise  
To offer droves of Beasts for Sacrifice;  
A bleeding Heart shou'd my devotion prove,  
That, that's an offering only worthy Love.  
When my just reverence at the Altar's given  
(That holy, happy place, the Type of Heaven)  
Or at the sacred name, I turn me round  
And when my Eyes have their dear Idol found.  
I bow, for that's the holiest place to me,  
Since 'tis made so by her Divinity.  
But she is cruel on a double Score,  
Tho' still alas I languish, still adore.  
From Heav'n she turns my prayers with her strong Charms,  
Nor gives another Heav'n in her dear Arms.  
Then tell me, Athens! tell me how to fly,  
This dear, this dangerous, dangerous Enemy!  
Direct my wandering Eyes, and kindly shew,  
To pay my Adoration where 'tis due!

Answer.

When the glad sound bids thee for Church prepare,  
Put on clean Thoughts, or never enter there!  
New dress thy Soul, and all that's Earth remove,  
To tast the purer Joys of heavenly Love!  
'Twill well deserve, 'twill well requite thy pains,  
To barter Dross for Gold's sufficient Gains.  
Who loves not Beauty that has Heart or Eyes?  
To that we not unjustly sacrifice?  
We wou'd exalt, but wou'd not quench thy flame;  
And fly thy Passion at a nobler Game.  
But first thou the fair Idol must despise,  
Near thence thy heart, and false adulterous Eyes?  
O weakly virtuous! Stop the kindling Fire,  
And curb th' imperuous Torrent of desire!  
Is he less charming who thy Heart demands?  
Thy bleeding Heart he asks with bleeding Hands,  
There, there, amidst the adoring Quire he stands,  
True, tho' invisible, they lowly greet,  
And cast their Crowns at his Triumphant Feet.  
O all beloved! all lovely; in whose Eyes  
Majesty mixt with matchless Goodness vyes,  
Faint Glowworms-Rays shall we all ravish'd see,  
Yet find, Eternal Sun, no Charms in thee?  
Sure we are thine upon a double score,  
By Conquest much, but by thy Mercy more.  
Rebels and Slaves thou dost not us disown,  
But make us share thy Heart and radiant Throne.  
Saviour! dispell the Clouds, and let us see,  
See and compare the worthless world and thee.  
We soon shall chuse whence we the difference find  
O lend an Ear, oft to our Prayers inclin'd!  
For 'tis thy well known Art to Cure the Blind.

Quest. 2. Gentlemen, I having been always a great  
Opposer of that Opinion, which makes God to have de-  
termined by his Immutable Decrees, all the Good and  
Evil, which every Man should Act or Do (so determi-  
ned is, I mean as that every Man is necessitated to ev-

ry Action of his whole Life) and one great Reason was  
and still is, because I cannot think (much less believe)  
that so Wise and Merciful a Being as God is, should by  
his Decree oblige any Man to do that for which he shall  
be for ever Punished, and that which yet further confirms  
me in my Opinion is, not only your Judgment herein (if  
I mistake not) but also that of the most judicious Clergy-  
men of our own Church, I mean the Church of England,  
and yet after all, I cannot, and therefore desire you, to re-  
solve this Question.

Query, That since (which no Christian can deny) God  
did from the beginning foresee, whatever Good or Evil  
would come to pass, which must therefore come to pass,  
because he did foresee it, for otherwise he could not have  
foreseen it: Whether this does not amount in effect to the  
same thing with the above received Opinion, of Gods ob-  
liging every Man by his Decree to all the Actions of  
their Lives: As for Example, God did from all Eterni-  
ty foresee Adams fall, and his Redemption by Jesus  
Christ, as also the Time when, the Place where, and the  
Person by whom he should be Betrayed: Now if it must  
therefore come to pass, because God did foresee it,  
which I think is undeniable, then Judas could not avoid  
it, and if not, where lay his Sin? But if it was in his  
Power to have avoided it, he might not have commit-  
ted it, and if he had not, how could God be said to fore-  
see it? Truly Sirs I send not these, because I would Cavil,  
but because I would be Informed: Desiring your Serious  
Thoughts and Answer, as soon as possible, which I know  
will be kindly accepted by several well meaning Persons,  
and will much oblige, Yours, &c.

Ans. We have several Times largely answer'd to  
these, and the like Questions, in our Supplements, and  
Weekly Mercuries, and gone deeper into the Difficul-  
ties thereof then we shall here do, having already  
consider'd much stronger Objections. At present let these  
following Positions suffice.

1. That God necessitates no Evil Action. This we  
think is plain from the Chapter and Text quoted in  
the foregoing Question, wherein he says, nay swears,  
that he desires not the Death of a Sinner, now if he  
does not desire, much less can he necessitate, either Cause,  
or Effect, Sin or Punishment, inseperable from one ano-  
ther, which is as disagreeable to his Nature, as 'tis to  
his Will, reveal'd in his Holy Word.

2. Tho' God necessitates no Evil, yet he foresees all.  
This the Honest Querist thinks no Christian denies,  
but the Socinians will be angry with him for not  
thinking 'em Christians, for those Men of Reason posi-  
tively deny it, as they do all other things which their  
Wisdoms can't comprehend, search to the bottom, and  
answer all Difficulties concerning 'em. But to leave  
them, and to the Point, that the only wise God fore-  
sees all that comes to pass seems plain, because he  
fore-knows, how all Causes will Act, let their Effects be  
never so various, they having no Powers but what he  
has given 'em, and his Knowledge being Infinite, the  
Knowledge even of a Wise man, extending a little way  
into Futurity, concluding effects from causes, and con-  
versing about such Objects as are then not in actual  
Being, much more can the Knowledge of God do so.  
The Scriptures prove the same, even of Future Con-  
tingencies, what could be more Contingent than several  
Circumstances. (For Example) in the Crucifixion of  
our Saviour? particularly the very Manner of his  
Death, the piercing his Hands and Feet, the Vinegar  
and Gall, the casting Lots for his Coat, &c. Which  
were certainly foreseen, because foretold or prophesied  
of, so long before they happen'd, and if one Non-En-  
tity may be the Object of Knowledge, why not ano-  
ther?

3. But



3. But yet this foreknowledge does by no means necessitate, it supposes, not makes, because, as before, God can't necessitate to Evil, if he Tempts no Man to Evil, much less does he necessitate, the first is Scripture, the latter Reason. Indeed should he do it, the Nature of Man would be destroy'd, the Proposal of Rewards and Punishments, Ironical, Preaching vain, and Faith vain.

But if you ask us to reconcile all the Difficulties, that appear to our shallow Reason in this great Point, we Promise to do it, when the Philosophers can solve the Incommensurability of Matter, and twenty other Phenomena, and make 'em agree with Demonstrations, which appear Diametrically opposite unto 'em. In the mean time, let us think soberly and modestly, as becomes us, in these Matters. Let every one enjoy his own Sense, so he makes not God the Author of Sin, and let us all cry out, How unsearchable are his Judgments, and his ways past finding out?

Quest. 3. Looking back on your Mercuries, I read that of March 6. 1693. and had I read it sooner perhaps might before now given you the following relation. I also enter'd Religion with Sweetness beyond Expression, and so continued, 'till by being remiss in my Duty (which I did not think would have run me to what I afterwards found) I fell at first by almost undiscernable measures, 'till I grew worse and worse, and at length openly Profane, a Swearer, a Common Drunkard, and guilty of some of the most heinous Crimes, indeed not fit to be mentioned: I continued in this horrid State more than Eight Years: In this long time of Rebellion against my Creator, I had some times sharp Reflections, and made some faint Attempts to regain my lost Happiness, but being so hardened and senseless, all turned to a miserable Account, neither Prayer nor Sermons could affect me, though I almost constantly attend them of the Church of England, of which I ever was and am a Member, 'till it pleased God by some unhappy Accident in my Affairs to put me upon thinking that this World is a Cheat, and that most certainly I must be eternally ruined if I continued in this Condition, wherein who can guess the Horrors I was under, but they who are more than guessers at it? but not daring to be too Curious in scanning those past Circumstances, I fell immediately to earnest Prayers and Self-denial, abstaining from Drinking and other Sins, and blessed be God now in about a Year and half have in some measure renewed my Hopes, and have recovered some Sense of God and Goodness, tho' I can't say am arriv'd to that degree that once I was in, yet I hope I am sincere, and shall once again through the Assistance of God's Holy Spirit, and continual Endeavours, regain my former Station: However I desire your Judgment concerning it?

Ans. 'Tis a small thing to be Judg'd by Man, the Judgment of God is greater, and certainly Infalible, take it then as he himself has given it, Ezek. 18. When the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth Iniquity, and doth according to all the Abominations that the wicked man doth, shall he live? all his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mention'd; in his trespass that he hath trespass'd, and in his Sins that he hath sinn'd, in them shall he dye; but if the wicked

will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my Statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not dye, all his Transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mention'd unto him, in his Righteousness that he hath done shall he live.

## Advertisements.

**T**he English Translation of Malbranch's Search after Truth (mention'd in last Mondays Gazette) will be Publish'd next August, printed upon an extraordinary fine Paper and Character in Folio, and done into English from the Paris 4th Edition by Mr. Saalt, Author of the New Treatise of Algebra. Part of this Translation has been seen by the Reverend Mr. John Norris, upon whose Approbation and Revival the whole will be Publish'd. The great Care taken in the Translating and Revising this Work, has encouraged the Undertakers to Print it without Subscriptions. The Undertakers are John Dunton at the Raven in the Poultry, and S. Manship at the Ship in Cornhill, for whom this Work was Licensed (and so became their Property) long before any others were heard to attempt it.

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